VIII

THE SAIYIDS OF ḤAḌRAMAWT

THERE CAN BE FEW ARISTOCRACIES with so long a history as the posterity of Muḥammad the Arabian Prophet, certainly no aristocracy so widely disseminated over Asia and Africa, playing century upon century an important and consistent role in the Islāmic community. Nor can any branch of the numerous Sharīf and Saiyid families founded over fourteen centuries ago claim a more varied sphere of activity, of achievement indeed, than the 'Alawī Saiyids of Ḥaḍramawt. Little known as their country is, even to scholars, despite its proximity to the world's greatest trade-route, its very isolation has preserved much of ancient Arabia, so that to know the Saiyids is to comprehend at least something of their great ancestor, the founder of Islām.

In the ancient inscriptions of Southern Arabia figures an aristocratic group, the Musawwad—I give the name this vocalization, though of course the pronunciation is not indicated in the inscriptions, because, while discussing it with my most reliable Ḥaḍrami shaikh, he stated that in Tarīm today one says 'Musawwad' for the Saiyids, the Prophet's posterity, and 'Mushaiyakh', or Mashāyikh, for the noble families which bear of right the hereditary title of Shaikh, denoting a class distinction and *not* a tribal chief. The Saiyids and Shaikhs are families, clans, in which special qualities, virtues of a supernatural kind, and nobility, sharaf, are held to reside—qualities termed by modern Arab writers 'al-sulṭat al-rūḥīyah', spiritual power, a phrase which I employ for want of a better, though being derived from Europe it is not an exact conceptual term. The Musawwad of ancient Arabia played an important part in the councils and decrees of the pre-Islāmic community, as do their descendants in the Islāmic community to this day.[1]

[1] Jacques Ryckmans, *L'Institution monarchique* (Louvain, 1951), pp. 21–23, where in Ma'īn they form with the king the ruling power, though this does not seem to be so in Saba. I consider it possible for families to have held these

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Early Arabic literature frequently alludes to Saiyids, especially poetry and biography of the Prophet, and I must also refer here to another term of common occurrence, 'the sharīf'[1] (plural ashrāf), now employed as the title of the Ḥasanī branch of the Prophet's offspring.[2] In ancient times 'sharīf' is applied to persons holding spiritual distinctions and was often synonymous with Saiyid,[3] and I think, after preliminary observations, that it had actually much the same sense as Saiyid. In Ḥaḍramawt it was from early times used for the Prophet's posterity, and to this day a lady of a Saiyid house is known as a 'Sharīfah'.

The late Père Lammens, in his study[4] on the sanctuaries of pre-Islāmic Arabia, has accumulated valuable evidence on the Saiyid class, but has, I think, failed to perceive the logical conclusion to his researches. 'Rien de plus ordinaire', he observes, 'dans l'antiquité au temps de la préhistoire islamique (al-Jāhilīyah) que la réunion des dignités de Kāhin et Saiyid', of soothsayer and Saiyid. Some kāhins were also ḥakams, judge-arbitrators; some Saiyids were sādins, temple-guardians of the goddess al-Lāt. Hishām ibn Mughīrah is described as a 'Saiyid miṭ'ām', one who entertained the guest. Judging by comparison with present-day Arabia, where this type of institution is known as a 'maṭbakh', he would defray the costs from temple revenue. The term 'Saiyid' in these cases is associated with functions exercised by those endowed with 'spiritual power', persons forming the next

powers continuously from very early times up to the present day, though the role they played is naturally more durable than the families themselves.

[1] For the term 'Sharīf' applied to a noble class in Ḥaḍramawt about the time of Islām cf. A. F. L. Beeston, 'The So-called Harlots of Hadramaut', *Oriens* (Leiden, 1952), v. i. 16–22.

[2] Cf. C. v. Arendonk's excellent article 'Sharīf' in *Encycl. Islam.*

[3] In quite recent times Bā Riḍwān, author of *al-Qawl al-Ḥasan* (manuscript seen in W. Aden Prot.), makes the terms 'Saiyid' and 'Sharīf' synonymous, as indeed do other South Arabian authors.

[4] 'Le Culte des Bétyles', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* (Cairo, 1919), xvii. 106–7, &c. The study of the use of the terms 'Saiyid' and 'Sharīf' in early Islāmic literature is still to be made. I use Lammens's material for convenience.

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approximation to a *caste sacerdotale*—the existence of which, for North Arabia at least, Lammens[1] denies.

The Meccan Saiyids constituted much of the opposition to Muḥammad himself.[2] Expressing amazement that Muḥammad should claim revelation, al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah exclaims: 'Is revelation given to Muḥammad while I am left, although I am the Kabīr of Quraish and their Saiyid, and Abū Mas'ūd 'Amr ibn 'Umar al-Thaqafī, the Saiyid of Thaqīf, is left [also], though we be the two great persons of the two cities [Mecca and Ṭā'if]?'[3]

The plain interpretation of al-Walīd's protest is that, as the spiritual head, the Saiyid, of Quraish, and the Kabīr or temporal ruler,[4] he himself is the natural repository of that virtue of spiritual power and of revelation.

On the other hand, in Madīnah it was through the persuasion of two of their own Saiyids that the Banū 'Abd al-Ashhal and their ḍa'īfs, peasants, were converted to Islām, though the Saiyids were at first hostile.[5] This influence differs in nature from that of a mere tribal chief. The title Saiyid is even applied in the *Sīrah*[6] to a Jewish notable and to one of the Christian leaders of the Najrān deputation, not the bishop, who came to Madīnah.[7] (He seems to have exercised

[1] Ibid., p. 107. Of South Arabia he says also that 'elle appartient à une autre évolution réligieuse'. More recent research does not support this view. Lammens, op. cit., p. 83, also quotes the interesting verse:

وبنو دودان حيٌّ سادةٍ حلّ بيت المجد فيهم والعَدَد

[2] A Sharīf is also found contradicting the Prophet (A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (Oxford, 1955), p. 164). Idem, p. 540, cites a family of Ashrāf the members of which are assessed at a double blood-wit.

[3] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858–60), p. 238.

[4] The term 'Kabīr' as a tribal chief is attested from the ancient inscriptions and even in modern South Arabia, as for instance in the Saiwūn MS. of the *Manāqib Bā 'Abbād*, the Kabīr of Nahd. Abū Sufyān is described as the shaikh Quraish wa-kabīr-ha. To him the Ashrāf of Quraish entrust the revenge of Badr (H. Lammens, 'La République marchande de la Mecque', *Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien* (Cairo, 1910), v. iv. 23–54. The terms employed are all significant.

[5] A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 200. [6] Ibid., p. 361.

[7] *Sīrah*, ed. Wüstenfeld, op. cit., p. 401. He was 'ṣāḥib raḥl-hum wa-mujtama'-hum'. Other significant references to Saiyids are to be found in H. Lammens,

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a priestly function, that of selecting auspicious times of travel.) This is in no way strange, for families endowed with nobility and supernatural virtues need have lost nothing by conversion to Christianity or Judaism. It is significant, for example, that on conversion one of the 'Abd al-Ashhal Saiyids became a naqīb[1]—the precise sense of the word is not determined, but in medieval Southern Arabia powerful Ṣūfī saints had often naqībs over their adherents in more distant villages.[2] In Upper Egypt this word is still employed for the attendant of a tomb.[3]

Writers in our Western plutocratic society have expressed scepticism about Muḥammad's noble ancestry, on account

'La République', op. cit., p. 35/13, where 'Abdullāh b. J'id'ân (*sic*) who was Saiyid Quraish fi 'l-Jāhilīyah is mentioned. In his house was concluded the agreement known as Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl, just as today, in Ḥaḍramawt, agreements are concluded in the houses of Saiyids and Mashāyikh, who preside over the proceedings, and especially in the houses of Manṣabs. A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 555, gives an account of the pains to which the Prophet went after the fall of Mecca to prevent a Qurashī Saiyid from committing suicide. Had the latter been a mere political rival, would Muḥammad have taken such steps? Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (Cairo, 1940–53), iii. 363, alludes to a Saiyid Sharīf of Taim al-Lāt, and to a Saiyid Ḥimyar in Syria at the time of Mu'āwiyah, iii. 370.

[1] A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 204. What became of the religious aristocracy of pre-Islāmic Arabia has not been investigated, but I suspect that it may early have become the repositories and exponents of the new faith, *especially in the realm of law*. It is inappropriate to develop this theme here, but I must draw attention to the significant tradition which has been brought back to a quite early time by the publication of J. David Weill, *Le Djâmi' d' Ibn Wahb* (Le Caire, 1939), p. 6: الناس معادن خيارهم فى الجاهلية خيارهم فى الاسلام اذا فقهوا 'People are of (various) origins; the noblest of them in the Jāhilīyah are the noblest of them in Islam if they be instructed.' This may be interpreted also as 'if they have a knowledge of the law'. Ma'ādin al-'Arab is defined as أصولهم التى يُنْسَبون اليها ويتفاخرون بها. The saying is attributed to the Prophet as applying to the people of his time. For the application of this phrase in South Arabia, see Jamal J. Nasir, *The Doctrine of Kafā'ah . . . with a Critical Edition of the Zaidī MS. Al-Mir'āt al-Mubaiyinah lil-Nāẓir mā huwa al-ḥaqq fī Mas'alat al-Kafā'ah*, dissertation S.O.A.S. Library, 1955, pp. 19, 23, 24.

[2] The *Manāqib Bā 'Abbād* (Saiwūn copy), for instance, mentions a certain naqīb Abā M d r k at Shabwah.

[3] C. B. Klunzinger, *Upper Egypt* (London, 1878), p. 394. Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*. Wüstenfeld, op. cit., p. 295, mentions another Saiyid Sharīf who becomes a naqīb. Cf. also, op. cit., p. 301.

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of his personal indigence, but not only is the nobility of his family attested by the offices of high distinction they held at the Ka'bah among Quraiš, a tribe described by Ibn Duraid[1] as Āl Allāh, but in Arabia an outstanding personality born into a family endowed with spiritual power or virtue may well become a powerful saint, while the meanly born son of a wealthy trader could not aspire to such distinction. A verse attributed to Ka'b ibn Malik[2] describes the Prophet's uncle Ḥamzah as 'a noble prince, strong in the lofty stock of Hāšhim, whence come prophecy, generosity, and lordship [Sūdad]'. That is to say, the Hāšhimites were a Saiyid house, and Muḥammad a cadet of a noble religious family associated with a prominent Arabian sanctuary, but if one considers the historical evidence of the inscriptions, it may not necessarily have been the *most* prominent sanctuary, nor his family necessarily considered the *most* holy in all pre-Islāmic Arabia.[3]

[1] *Išhtiqāq*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1854), p. 94. On Quraiš, al-Jāḥiẓ (*Ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1938), v. 333) quotes a verse, 'I never saw a Quraišī red of the veins of the eyes except he was a courageous Saiyid'.

[2] A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 419. It is a matter of little account whether the verse be contemporary or not; the important issue is the conception of the house of Hāšhim.

[3] The pre-eminence of Quraiš is, of course, maintained by the Arabic sources (A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 686). A reiteration of the opinion held by the Saiyids on their ancestry is to be found in 'Alawī b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād, *al-Qawl al-Faṣl fī-mā li-Banī Hāšhim wa-Quraiš min Faḍl* (Būqūr, 1344 H.). In the Koran itself the conception of a family or family group endowed with spiritual power is quite explicit. The Prophets were in all cases the lineal descendants of former Prophets. Kor. lvii. 26: 'We formerly sent Noah and Abraham and appointed the Prophetic office and Book to be in their Posterity; among them is an (occasional) one who lets himself be guided, but many of them are reprobate.' The Jews at an earlier period had lost their spiritual virtue, and one would infer that the Arab families connected with the shrine and opposing Muḥammad were in the process of losing their virtue too. Kor. x. 83: 'There only believe in Moses a posterity of his people on account of fear of Pharaoh and their council (mala') lest they should persecute them for Pharaoh was lofty in the land and was one of the extravagant.' This latter phrase might well apply to a notable enjoying and spending liberally of the temple revenues in entertainment and thus satisfying the people so that they would not listen to Muḥammad. The passage obviously relates to Muḥammad's condition in Mecca. Again, Kor. iv. 57, the family of Abraham—by which the Prophet is probably meant—is described as endowed with virtue (faḍl) and ḥikmah, which may be interpreted as the ability to arbitrate—a very important function of Saiyids. To

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By the time that Islām was three centuries old, Muḥammad's descendants through his daughter Fāṭimah and his cousin 'Alī numbered thousands. Though persecuted on the one hand, they were respected, honoured, and had even grown wealthy on the contributions of their adherents. Deprived of political responsibility, they had turned to learning and had, for example, developed the important Zaidī law school of Kūfah and perhaps Baṣrah. In 897/283 a Zaidī Imām had founded a tiny state in the Yemen which, surviving through many vicissitudes, has endured to this day. A little later a certain Saiyid Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā, of the 8th generation from Fāṭimah through her son Ḥusain, left Baṣrah accompanied by his second son, in face of the Karmathians,[1] or, as others say, the outrages of the Negro Zinj.[2] They tried unsuccessfully, because of the Karmathians, to perform the pilgrimage until 930/318, after which they went to the Yemen. Some authorities place their further migration to Ḥaḍramawt about the year 952/340. For a time they lived in al-Hajarain village, which would lie near the area of Ibāḍī influence. Later they settled in al-Ḥusaiyisah, where I have visited the reputed[3] tomb of Aḥmad, known as al-Muhājir the Emigrant, lying up the mountain-side like so many ancient Ḥaḍramī shrines.

Saiyid writers maintain that al-Muhājir revived and spread the teaching of the sunnah according to the Shāfi'ī rule, but this can be little else than a projection of later circumstances into the past, for there are no historical sources near contemporary. Some present-day Saiyid historians have, indeed, propounded the theory that, far from being Shāfi'īs, al-Muhājir and his son were Imāmis, Shī'ah, and their view

Muḥammad it is natural that spiritual qualities should reside exclusively in certain families and be inherited, just as trades were hereditary in other family groups.

[1] F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Çufiten in Süd-Arabien* (Göttingen, 1883).

[2] Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan . . . al-Ḥaddād, *al-Fawā'id al-Sanīyah*, fol. 125*b*. Cf. for other views 'Aidarūs b. 'Umar b. 'Aidarūs al-Ḥabshī, *'Iqd al-Yawāqīt al-Jawharīyah* (Cairo, 1317), i. 130 seq.

[3] Al-Nabhānī, *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'* (Cairo, 1912), i. 327, reports that some persons say that this is not really his tomb.

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is not untenable,[1] but it is unlikely in Ḥaḍramawt, where Ibāḍī views were held, that they could very openly propagate Shī'ite views, for in Baṣrah they must already have experienced the intense hatred of Ibāḍis for the Shī'ah.[2]

Of the supposed struggle between the Saiyids and Ibāḍīs nothing factual is known. Even during the Umaiyad period Ibāḍism had flourished in the Yemen until its leader al-Ṣabbāḥ ibn Shuraḥbīl ibn Abrahah of Hamdān (a fine galaxy of Yemenite names) was driven from the Ḥijāz. On the fall of Ṣan'ā' the routed Ibāḍīs fled across the desert to Ḥaḍramawt.[3] By the time of al-Hamdānī,[4] exactly contemporary with al-Muhājir's migration, there was little Ibāḍism among the Tujīb tribe in middle Ḥaḍramawt, but it was strongest among the Ṣadif. Shibām was said to be the first town of Ḥimyar which, with probably also the capital, Tarīm, was under control of the Banū Fahd.[5] In Shibām Ibāḍism was certainly strong, for Shanbal[6] chronicles it as being cleared out of 'their mosque' in 1195/590. The Persian *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam*,[7] compiled after 983/372, tells us that 'they have a custom that to any stranger who enters their town[8] and makes public prayer they bring food thrice a day and pay him great attention, unless he differs with them in sect —mukhālafatī kunad ba-madhhab bā īshān'. Nashwān ibn Sa'īd,[9] writing before 1177/573, alludes in passing to

[1] A controversy on this subject took place between the Saiwūn historians and 'Alawī b. Ṭāhir of Johore. [2] Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, op. cit. iii. 9, 22.

[3] Ibn Miskawaih, 'Al-'Uyūn wa-'l-Ḥadā'iq', in *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum*, ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1869), i. 171 seq. I think two accounts have been dovetailed here, for another leader is mentioned, Abrahah b. Shuraḥbīl b. Ṣabbāḥ al-Ḥimyarī, the names being almost identical but in reverse order. The Ḥaḍramī Ibāḍī leader was 'Abdullāh b. Ma'bad, reminiscent of the Bā Ma'bad Mashāyikh who gave their name to 'Ain Bā Ma'bad.

[4] *Ṣifat Jazirat al-'Arab*, ed. D. H. Müller (Leiden, 1884–91), i. 87–88.

[5] According to manuscript fragments of *Tārīkh Bā Sharāḥīl* which I saw in Saiwūn recently.

[6] See my 'Materials' in *B.S.O.A.S* (London, 1950), XIII. ii. 291.

[7] Trans. V. Minorsky (London, 1937), p. 147.

[8] By 'their town' Tarīm may be meant. The *Ḥudūd* is tantalizingly vague.

[9] *Al-Ḥūr al-'Īn* (Cairo, 1948), p. 203. The actual name of the section of Hamdān is B sh q, which I have not succeeded in tracing in other sources.

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a group of Ibāḍīs of the Hamdān tribe as still existing in Ḥaḍramawt.

'The Imām', says Hamdānī,[1] 'who has the power of ordering and forbidding over the Ibāḍīs, is in the town of Daw'an.' I deduce from the scant historical evidence that Ḥaḍramawt was fragmented into a diversity of petty tribal states, and the Imām perhaps as much a religious as a temporal chief over scattered Ibāḍī groups, but it was in western Ḥaḍramawt that his headquarters lay—where the Saiyids have still made relatively little headway. In conversation Saiyids have maintained to me that there are still traces of Ibāḍism, quoting anti-'Alī-id expressions said to belong to the common parlance of the country, but I have not heard these myself.

At the close of the twelfth century, the Banū Baṣrī and Jadīd branches having left no male issue, the Banū 'Alawī who remained gave their name to the Saiyid clan—the 'Alawī Saiyids.[2] So closely is this name linked with them that a folk-verse says,

بعض الاسامى تِلْحقِ الّا بالمَرَض

عَلْوِى فِىَ الضَّعْفا وفى الساده عَوَض

Some names bring naught but ill,
'Alwī for peasants, and 'Awaḍ for Saiyids.

Other names such as Ḥusain, Ḥasan, Zain, associated with Saiyids, are not used by peasants either—they have special names peculiar to themselves.

Meanwhile, attacks had been made on their claim to descent from the Prophet, so about the year 1100/*c.* 500 one of the Saiyids went to Baṣrah and produced some sixty respected Baṣrans to attest to the relationship with the Iraqī

[1] Op. cit., pp. 87–88.

[2] Wüstenfeld, *Die Çufiten*, op. cit., p. 4. 'Alawī b. Ṭāhir in *'Uqūd al-Almās* (Singapore, 1949–50), ostensibly a biography of Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-'Aṭṭās, discusses the origins of the Ḥaḍramī Saiyids and their connexion with the Baṣran families, a very technical and complex study.

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Saiyids in presence of the Ḥaḍramī contingent at the Meccan pilgrimage. Ever since then the 'Alawī Saiyids have maintained their family registers with scrupulous care—you may see them recorded in volumes in any Saiyid house, and even during the reign of the late Imām Yaḥyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn of the Yemen they induced him to confirm their descent from the Prophet, publishing a facsimile of his statement in Java.[1] Despite the lack of early sources, however, there is no great reason to be suspicious of the descent of the Ḥaḍramī Saiyids, for it is difficult in Arabia to support a spurious pedigree, the more so, of course, when financial considerations enter.

When the Saiyids reached Ḥaḍramawt, the author of *al-Fawā'id al-Sanīyah*[2] tells us, they found scholars in Tarīm who consoled them for parting from their native land. When they came to Tarīm from the adjacent village of Bait Jubair in 1127/521 Ḥaḍramawt certainly had its local scholars, for the Bodleian manuscript of Bā Ḥassān refers to faqīhs[3] who in 1116/510 came from Ḥaḍramawt to study in the Yemenite city of al-Janad. These scholars, to judge from numerous Ḥaḍramī biographical manuscripts, belonged to the Mashāyikh class as distinguished from the tribesmen, townsfolk, and peasants, enjoying the privilege and honour accorded to the lords of spiritual power in Southern Arabia, and governing the sacred enclaves known as 'ḥawṭah'.

Mashāyikh families are many, but I have at present documentary evidence covering only three in any detail, the Āl Bā 'Abbād, the Āl Khaṭīb, and the Āl Bā Faḍl. The Āl Bā 'Abbād are associated with the shrine of the Prophet Hūd,[4] the Āl Khaṭīb,[5] hereditary preachers, claim descent

[1] In *al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawīyah* (Batavia, 1351 H.).

[2] *Al-Fawā'id*, fol. 32*b*: 'arbāb al-'ulūm wa-aṣḥāb al-fuhūm wa-'l-albāb mā yushghil-hum 'an al-ahl wa-'l-waṭan.'

[3] There they studied with Zaid b. 'Abdullāh al-Fāyishī al-Ma'āfirī, to whom came faqīhs from Lahej and Ḥaḍramawt.

[4] 'Umar b. Saqqāf in his *Dashṭah* says that the Bā 'Abbād go back to 'Abd al-Shams, Hūd, and Qaḥṭān.

[5] *Al-Burd al-Na'im fī Nasab al-Anṣār Khuṭabā' Tarīm* (for which see my 'Materials', loc. cit., p. 305) says that 'Abbād b. Bishr was sent to collect the

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from 'Abbād ibn Bishr, who accompanied the first Muslim armies to Ḥaḍramawt, and the Bā Faḍl, too, claim as ancestor a Companion of the Prophet. Ancient Arabic sources hardly support the claim to 'Abbād ibn Bishr as founder of the Āl Khaṭīb, for he died in Yamāmah, but it is significant that these families are conscious of being so long settled in Ḥaḍramawt as to claim an Islāmic hero for their eponym—there would be no merit in claiming a pagan. The hagiologies allude to members of these families as Saiyids—'Sādat-nā wa-Qādat-nā al-'Abbādīyah,[1] our Saiyids and leaders the Bā 'Abbād'; an early manuscript work by a non-Saiyid author speaks of al-Sādah al-Khuṭabā' and al-Sādah Āl Faḍl.[2] The early 15th/9th-century history *al-Jawhar al-Shaffāf*[3] refers to both al-Shaikh 'Alawī (in fact one of the Prophet's posterity) and Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb (who was not) by the common title of the 'Two Saiyids'—it furthermore often refers to the Prophet's descendants by the title of Shaikh and *not* Saiyid.[4]

The unselfconscious testimony of many different sources indicates that the prominent Mashāyikh families were known, as often as not, as Saiyids until at least the late Middle Ages. In the first stage of their history the Ḥaḍramī perhaps regarded the 'Alawī Saiyids as only one of these Mashāyikh groups—with which he was already familiar, and far from creating an immediate impression on the country, it was probably some time before they established their far-reaching

zakāt tax from al-Lisik by Ziyād b. Labīd al-Bayāḍī, but he was killed, and buried in a cave in Jabal al-Lisik. 'It is famed for the ziyārah, like the Prophet Hūd in Ḥaḍramawt.'

[1] So in *Manāqib al-Shaikh 'Abdullāh Bā 'Abbād*, in a manuscript of mixed contents belonging to Saiyid 'Alī b. Sālim of Ḥuraiḍah. The shaikh in question was born in 1219/616.

[2] *Al-Burd al-Na'īm*, manuscript cit. Al-Sharjī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Khawāṣṣ* (Cairo 1903), calls certain shaikhs, 'sādah ahl al-'ilm'.

[3] See 'Materials', *B.S.O.A.S.* XIII. iii, 1950, p. 582. A microfilm of part ii is now in the Library of the School. The passage is anecdote no. 473 of vol. ii.

[4] According to my friend Saiyid Ṣāliḥ b. 'Alī al-Ḥāmidī, Ḥusain's posterity were known as Saiyids only by imitation of the usage in Mecca, before which they were called Sharīfs. All the evidence bears out his statement.

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claims to a special privileged position, claims in fact never accepted by numbers of Ḥaḍramis to this day.[1]

A curious tale in *al-Jawhar al-Shaffāf*[2] reveals a little of the course of that struggle for supremacy between the 'Alawīs and the Mashāyikh.[3] As if in a dream, a Ḥaḍrami faqīr describes how he saw the Day of Resurrection, with all the people of the world in a desert land, devoid of stock and stone. 'There', says he, 'were the Mashāyikh, going down. Each shaikh had with him his faqīrs, and wore a crown and cloak adorned with precious stones. I greeted Shaikh Sa'īd ibn 'Īsā, then Shaikh Muḥammad Bā 'Abbād. "Why are you standing here?" he said. "Waiting for my shaikh," said I. To which he replied, "When the sheep has no shepherd it gets eaten by the wolf." [He means that a person who follows no Ṣūfī shaikh cannot find favour with the Almighty].' Eventually his shaikh—the Saiyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān—comes by, with his nephew Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī, followed by many faqīrs, then the common people, and last of all the Sulṭāns and their men (a hit at the tribal rulers of Ḥaḍramawt). When the story-teller asks the 'Alawī Saiyids why they wear two crowns and cloaks, he is told it is because they are greater than the Mashāyikh. 'And', says one of the Saiyids, 'was not my ancestor the Apostle of God?' He explains that one crown and cloak are for mashyakhah, the quality of being a shaikh (this probably referring to their rank as Ṣūfīs), while the other pair is for sharaf, noble descent from the Prophet. The Mashāyikh, the Saiyid affirms, will be swallowed up with their faqīrs in his own virtue and followers, as a great engulfing flood sweeps all before it.

The Khaṭīb and Faḍl Mashāyikh of Tarīm have now taken second position to the Saiyids, though still honoured, and

[1] For example, the *Manāqib Bā 'Abbād* (Saiwūn copy) states of one of the Bā 'Abbād shaikhs, 'wa-kān ahl al-zawāyā ya'tū-hu li-'l-tabarruk mithl Bā 'Alawī wa-ahl Abī Wazīr wa-Āl Abī Sa'īd b. 'Īsā'.

[2] Op. cit., Anecdote no. 349.

[3] There was, of course, rivalry between the Mashāyikh themselves; the Saiwūn MS. of the *Manāqib Bā 'Abbād*, for example, shows that 'Abdullāh Bā 'Abbād and Sa'īd b. 'Īsā al-'Amūdī were rivals. Cf. al-Sharjī, op. cit., p. 70.

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they have long been linked to them by ties of affection. A Bā Faḍl historian[1] maintains that the Bā Faḍl had the power and shaikhdom before the 'Alawī Saiyids arrived, but divested themselves of the taqbīl—the privilege of having the hand or knee kissed, colloquially known as shammah, and of the title 'ḥabīb'[2]—these they resigned to the 'Alawīs. The Saiyid scholar 'Abdullāh Bal-Faqīh[3] condemns this statement as unhistorical, but similar privileges are the prerogative of Mashāyikh in districts where Saiyid influence is weak. I was often impressed by their bitter hostility to the Saiyids. An 'Amūdī shaikh in Bedouin Najaidain, in front of my Saiyid companion, contemptuously quoted me the saying, 'Al-Shaikh Shaikh wa-l-'Saiyid aish min ṭāḥishah [elsewhere ṭāshah]',[4] that is, A Shaikh is a Shaikh—as we all know—but what sort of a thing is a Saiyid? I heard this again in the mouth of a Bā Nāfi' Shaikh in Yashbum.[5] But this ancient rivalry of Saiyid and Shaikh has not stood in the way of personal friendships nor prevented the transmission of 'ilm, religious knowledge, to each other, for in this matter Islām transcends faction and all nowadays are Shāfi'īs.

I have alluded already to the ḥawṭah, the sacred enclave which, under various names, has played so important a part

[1] Al-Shaikh Muḥ. b. 'Awaḍ Bā Faḍl, *Ṣilat al-Ahl bi-Tadwīn Manāqib Āl Abī Faḍl*. This writer was no longer alive in 1953; he may have written the *Ṣilah* some thirty years previous to that date.

[2] The terms used are 'mashyakhah', 'taqbīl', ' 'imāmah', 'al-mukhāṭabah bi-lafẓ al-ḥabīb'. Young Saiyids tend to disapprove of the hand-kissing and make a show, at least, of withdrawing their hands when a peasant wishes to kiss them.

[3] 'Abdullāh b. Ḥasan Bal-Faqīh, *Jalā' al-Ḥaqā'iq wa-Tamḥīṣ al-Naql ḥawl mā awrada-hu Mu'allif Ṣilat al-Ahl*, both works being in manuscript. Al-Sharjī, op. cit., p. 36, mentions that the famous medieval saint Isma'īl al-Ḥaḍramī was honoured with taqbīl al-qadam. Today, when a tribesman agrees to a proposition he sniffs the Manṣab's hand, be he Shaikh or Saiyid, saying 'wa-kaff-ak al-ghālī, by your dear hand'. He might also address a Saiyid with the phrase, 'bi-rās Jaddak, by the head of your ancestor (Muḥammad)'.

[4] The word 'ṭāshah' was quoted to me in Shibām and said to mean 'ainah ('īnah), sort, species. A ṭāḥishah is said to be a species of bird unknown to you. This saying is said to have been uttered when the first Saiyid came to the Qiblī, West Ḥaḍramawt, and the Mashāyikh had never heard of Saiyids before.

[5] He said, however, 'qalī'ah' for 'ṭāḥishah', explaining it as naw', shakl, sort, species, or, he said, it could mean animal.

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in Arabian history. In a society where war is the norm of existence, a neutral territory is a necessity for reasons religious, political, and economic. The ḥawṭah is such an area, often situated at a natural road junction, where tribes meet, perhaps an important market. A saint, it is often recorded, in his own lifetime will demarcate a ḥawṭah with whitewashed pillars. After death his holiness and power are embodied in his tomb, now become a sanctuary, which his successor, known as Manṣab,[1] and his posterity administer. The essential political factor herein is that the saint induces the tribes or sulṭāns to contract agreements with him to maintain the inviolability of the ḥawṭah and define penalties for its infringement. So greatly revered are these enclaves that when we arrived at the boundary pillars of Ḥawṭat al-Faqīh 'Alī in Wāḥidī country, the Sulṭāns and everyone else in our party dismounted to enter on foot. The Manṣab has many privileges: he is brought nudhūr, votive offerings, he has freedom from customs and taxation, he is bequeathed tithes on land. In turn he entertains the guest, intervenes in battles, marching out with the saint's banner, or merely waving a palm-branch or his ridā; ultimately he acts as mediator. A Manṣab of personality can be a man of power and virtually rule the tribes. The late Manṣab of Thibī near Tarīm, whom I visited in his ḥawṭah, actually waged a private war for several years with the whole of Tarīm city and its Kathīrī Sulṭāns.

The ḥawṭah and the Meccan ḥaram are institutions identical in essence, and both even bear some relation to the ḥimā, or inviolable grazing, still occasionally found in South Arabia. Muḥammad constituted Madīnah a ḥaram and his rival Musailimah, it may be recalled, also set up a ḥaram,[2] an action parallel to the establishment of a new ḥawṭah, the setting up of a fresh centre of politico-religious influence.

[1] For notes on the Manṣab, cf. 'Two Tribal Law Cases (2)', *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1950, pp. 166–8.

[2] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. De Goeje cum aliis (Leiden, 1879), ii, 1932–3.

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Till the arrival of the Saiyids the Ḥaḍramī ḥawṭahs were in the hands of the Mashāyikh, who thereby curbed the tribes and their sulṭāns. The history of Saiyid power in Ḥaḍramawt is in some degree that of the growth of their influence through founding Saiyid ḥawṭahs, parallel with the decline of the Mashāyikh ḥawṭahs which they eclipsed. Shortly before the rise of the Āl Kathīr Sulṭāns, al-Ahdal[1] can say that the Bait Bā 'Alawī is the greatest of the manṣabs of Ḥaḍramawt, its centre being Tarīm, and that it comprises many scholars, Mashāyikh (perhaps in the sense of Ṣūfis) and commoners.

In available authorities I have so far found no record of when a Saiyid first established a ḥawṭah, but a late writer[2] mentions a ḥawṭah at Tarīm, respected by the Sulṭān, between the Bā 'Alawī, Saqqāf, and 'Aidarūs mosques. Today there are several ḥawṭahs in Tarīm, the most recent that of the Ḥaddāds at al-Ḥāwī, but I am told there are many ancient ḥawṭahs simply become part of the city wards. In 1402/804 it is recorded that the Khaṭīb Mashāyikh transferred from their own ḥawṭah to that of the Bā 'Alawī out of companionship[3]—implying, of course, a notable shift of authority. Al-Nabhānī[4] speaks of the ḥawṭah of 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Bā 'Alawī (ob. 838 H.), about this period, a place near Tarīm, describing the ills that befell animals pasturing there without permission, and the misfortune that

[1] Brit. Mus. MS. Or. 1345, al-Ḥusain b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ahdal (ob. 855/1451), *Tuḥfat al-Ẓaman*. The following section is based on al-Janadī (ob. 732/1331–2): He says that Bedouinism (badāwah) predominates over its inhabitants. From it have come notable scholars who hail from the two villages, they being Tarīm and Shibām, the older of them being Tarīm, for it is the town (madīnah) of Ḥaḍramawt and the dwelling-place of their kings the Āl Rāṣi'. . . . In the town are the habitations of the Āl Bā 'Alawī, the Ḥusainī Ashrāf.

[2] Muḥ. b. Abī Bakr al-Shillī, *al-Mashra' al-Rawī* (Cairo, 1319), i. 140.

[3] *Al-Burd al-Na'īm*, op. cit. 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb (ob. 804/1401–2) transfers from Ḥawṭat al-Khuṭabā' to Ḥawṭat Ḥāfat Āl Abī 'Alawī, because of his ṣuḥbah and wakālah for (li) the Shaikh 'Abdullāh b. Abī Bakr al-'Aidarūs. The term 'Ḥāfah' might imply that the Saiyids had a ward or quarter of their own.

[4] *Jāmi' Karāmāt*, op. cit. ii. 186.

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overtook a Bedouin who had only plucked a few of its sidr leaves to use as a hair-wash, for supernatural powers are regarded as protecting all ḥawṭah property. Towards the end of the 14th/8th century Sulṭān Rāṣi' ibn Duwais absolved the 'Alawī Saiyids from taxes,[1] though, of course, subsequently other rulers made successful attempts to collect them again. These events point to the great enlargement of Saiyid authority, and later Manṣabs even claimed special exemptions for their properties and adherents situated outside the ḥawṭah boundaries.

Of other ḥawṭahs founded by Saiyids in Ḥaḍramawt one of the most famous is that of 'Īnāt,[2] lying between Tarīm and the shrine of Hūd—it has played a great part in recent Ḥaḍramī history. Its founder Bū Bakr bin Sālim, known as Mawlā 'Īnāt, refused to acknowledge the Zaidī Imāms of the Yemen, and is also known for his vigorous attack on the smoking of tobacco. His descendants became famous mediators, with influence over the Yāfi'ī[3] and 'Awlaqī tribes, and to this day revenues, mostly in kind, of course, come to them by caravan from Jabal Yāfi', hundreds of miles away. On one occasion the Lord of 'Īnāt sent 'aqīrahs[4]—that is, cattle to be slaughtered by way of supplication—to the Yāfi'īs, so that they would come to fight against a Kathīrī Sulṭān who had adopted the Zaidī rite. But the Bū Bakr Saiyids were subjected to severe criticism from other Saiyid groups for adopting the ways of the Bedouin, and bearing arms.[5] Even now there is often

[1] 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Ubaidullāh al-Saqqāf', *Baḍā'i' al-Tābūt* (Aden, n.d.), p. 14. Today the Ḥaḍrami Saiyids call those Saiyids or Manṣabs who were free of taxes Āl Bā Thalāth Ka'āl (ka'āl meaning testicles), because they have more resources than the others!

[2] Muḥ. b. Hāshim, *Tārikh al-Dawlat al-Kathīrīyah* (Cairo, 1948), p. 89, &c. Aḥmad Faḍl b. 'Alī Muḥsin al-'Abdalī, *Hadīyat al-Zaman* (Cairo, 1351), pp. 108, 111, &c.

[3] Muḥ. b. Hāshim, op. cit., p. 91.

[4] For 'aqīrah see C. v. Landberg, *Gloss Dat.*

[5] *'Iqd al-Yawāqīt*, op. cit. i. 18, quotes as one of Satan's greatest wiles that he induces أبنآء الأخيار أن يزيّن لهم التزيّن بزيّ الجند والأشرار من لبس السلاح وتقصير الثياب وتبقية الشعر فمن تشبّه بقوم فهو منهم. The problem of the Saiyid of noble descent who, counter to what is expected of him, acts

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dissension with the Tarīm Saiyids, for 'Īnāt can stop the Hūd pilgrimage by simply having its tribes cut the road. The posterity of Bū Bakr bin Sālim is particularly numerous, many of his descendants being found in East Africa.

The Manṣabs of the Thibī ḥawṭah of the Āl 'Aidarūs are the hereditary naqībs of the 'Alawī Saiyids.[1] Elsewhere, of course, Saiyids and Ashrāf were organized under a sort of tribal head, a naqīb, from at least the 'Abbāsid period, but the second 'Alawī naqīb lived in the first part of the 15th/9th century, so this is a comparatively late innovation in Ḥaḍramawt.[2] The Manṣabs of Thibī sit at the head of any assembly, and at one time, it seems, the Manṣab judged in cases of Saiyid quarrels, but these are now usually referred to the Āl-Kāf.

Another famous if not ancient ḥawṭah is at the desert place known as al-Mashhad, near a pre-Islāmic ruin-field. It was founded by an 'Aṭṭās Saiyid who settled there to bring Islām to the Bedouin, of whom a poem in the Leiden collection of Snouck Hurgronje MSS.[3] says,

عَلِي حسنْ حوَّطَ الغَيْوَار وآمسى مَزارْ
صَبّحْ بقومهْ وبيّنْها كرامهْ جهارْ

immorally, has exercised the minds of the South Arabians. Bā Riḍwān, *al-Qawl al-Ḥasan*, quotes the verse:

اذا لم تكن نفس النسيب كاصله فما ذا الذى تغنى كرام المناصب
وان علوياً لم يكن مثل جعفر فما هو الّا حجة للنّواصبى
اذا لم تكن نفس الشريف شريفه والّا فتلك اكلة للمقارضى
متى سيد اخطا طريقة اهله فما ذاك الّا حجة للروافضى
يفتخرون بابآءٍ لهم سلفوا نعم الجدود ولكن بئس ما خلفوا

[1] There is no naqābah amongst the Saiyids, I was told; only the learned are counted naqībs nowadays, but I noticed that the Manṣab of al-Mashhad styles himself Naqīb al-Ashrāf.

[2] Abū Bakr . . . b. Shihāb, *Dīwān* (Būqūr, 1344), p. 151. 'Umar al-Miḥḍār b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf was the first to be elected naqīb of the 'Alawī Saiyids in Tarīm. He died in 838/1434–5 and was succeeded by 'Abdullāh b. Abī Bakr al-'Aidarūs (ob. 865/1461).

[3] Leiden Univ. MS. 2932, p. 306, ascribed to 'Alī b. Ḥasan himself.

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Most great Saiyid houses, apart from those mentioned—the Saqqāfs, Ḥaddāds, Ḥabshīs, Āl Bārr, Miḥḍār, Āl Jifrī, Bal-Faqīh—have ḥawṭahs of varying importance, or spiritual influence at least, over certain tribes.[1] Any might exercise the right of shafā'ah, intercession, and a sulṭān could scarcely refuse a request prefaced by the words 'wa-ḥaqq jaddī, by my ancestor's right'. Not long ago the newspapers in fact reported a case in which the Jifrī Saiyids of Lahej interceded with the Sulṭān.[2] The Mashāyikh also had, probably still have, these powers, for one reads often that a Shaikh had shafā'ah maqbūlah[3]—intercessionary rights which the Sulṭān of the day dare not refuse.

In considering the political aspect of the growth of Saiyid influence, their religious activities, especially in the domains of law and Ṣūfism, must not be overlooked. The first Saiyid to turn to Ṣūfism, says al-Ahdal,[4] was Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, called al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam in the early 13th/7th century, until when the Bā 'Alawī were known only for fiqh, law, and sharaf. It seems that Ḥaḍramī ulema at first resisted the Ṣūfī movements, for on hearing this his teacher, Abū Marwān 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sālim, with whom he had read fiqh, broke with him. To al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam[5] is ascribed an injunction to the Saiyids to abandon arms for the pursuit of religious and moral aims, and from him the 'Alawī ṭarīqah of which he is the quṭb has continued to the present day. The Saiyids affirm it is the best ṭarīqah, based on the

[1] Ṣalāḥ al-Bakrī, *Tārīkh Ḥaḍramawt al-Siyāsī* (Cairo, 1935–6), ii. 322, gives an anti-Saiyid view of 'spiritual influence' and ḥawṭahs. This could be set against the idealized view of *al-Fawā'id al-Sanīyah*, fol. 21*a–b*, which gives a Ṣūfistic interpretation of their function. The term 'manṣab' may have originated from such phrases as 'qa'ada fī manṣab al-mashyakhah': O. Löfgren, *Arabische Texte zur Kenntnis der Stadt Aden* (Uppsala, 1936), i. 39.

[2] Cf. *Hadiyat al-Zaman*, op. cit., pp. 192 seq.

[3] For a case in 'Ināt see al-Nabhānī, op. cit. i. 333. Numerous cases are to be found in al-Sharjī's *Ṭabaqāt*.

[4] Op. cit. B.M. MS., fol. 251*b*.

[5] *'Iqd al-Yawāqīt*, op. cit. i. 127. The 'Alawī Saiyids are only famous for al-karāmāt wa-'l-taslīk 'alā ṭarīqat al-Ṣūfīyah since the time of al-Faqīh al-Muqaddam, after laying down their arms. Muḥ . . . b. Shihāb, in appendixes to the Arabic version of Lothrop Stoddart, *Ḥāḍir al-'Ālam al-Islāmī* (Cairo, 1352), iii. 165, gives a list of the fakhīdhahs still bearing arms.

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Koran, the Sunnah, and the beliefs of the Pious Ancestors (al-Aslāf).[1] No 'Alawī may go counter to the way of those Pious Ancestors, but act with humility, piety, and lofty motive, with the Prophet for his model. The 'Alawī ṣūfī must love obscurity, dislike manifestation, withdraw from the madding crowd, but he must warn against neglect of religious duties. He must show kindness to wife, children, neighbours, relations, to the tribes, and all Muslims. A 19th-century writer advises the Saiyids not to mix with the people of that evil age when rulers are prone to injure those of religious rank. Silence and restraint, he says, are best; if perforce you meet evil persons, speak little and leave as soon as possible.[2] The famous blind 18th-century saint 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaddād avers that the Bā 'Alawī ṭarīqah is acknowledged the best by the Yemenis despite their heresy (bid'ah), and the Sharīfs of Mecca despite their own honourable rank. Arguments are adduced by 19th-century writers to show that an 'Alawī should join no other ṭarīqah such as, for example, the Sanūsī.[3] The 'Alawī dhikr is not accompanied by the practices so distasteful to contemporary Muslims in many other countries, but ḥaḍrahs are held in the mosques, and the Saqqāf mosque has musicians, the Servants of the Ṣaqqāf, who sing ṣūfī songs to pipe and drum.[4]

Saiyid character is deeply coloured by these principles. Polite and hospitable, the 'Alawī is also unsurpassed in love

[1] This section is based on Muḥ. b. Ḥusain b. 'Abdullāh b. Shaikh al-Ḥabshī, *al-'Uqūd al-Lu'lu'īyah fī Bayān Ṭarīqat al-Sādat al-'Alawīyah* (Cairo, 1289/1912–13), the author being Muftī of the Shāfi'īyah in Mecca at that time; 'Abdullāh b. Ḥusain b. Ṭāhir Bā 'Alawī, *Majmū' mushtamil 'alā Ṭhalāth wa-'Ishrīn Risālah* (Cairo, 1330), which includes a treatise entitled Fī Naṣīḥat al-Junūd (p. 108), injunctions to the tribes; and to a lesser extent on the Brit. Mus. MS. of 'Umar Bā Shaibān, *al-Tiryāq al-Shāf*, of which it appears no copy is known in Ḥaḍramawt nowadays; my own manuscript of 'Abd al-Raḥmān . . . al-Mashhūr, *Shams al-Ẓahīrah*, and other works in 'Materials for South Arabian History' (ii), op. cit.; 'Abdullāh b. Ḥasan Bal-Faqīh, *Risālatān Athriyatān min 'ahd al-Shuyūkh al-Awā'il li-'l-Ṭarīqat al-Taṣawwufīyah bi-Ḥaḍramawt*, a recent work still in manuscript.

[2] 'Alawī b. Aḥmad al-Saqqāf, *Majmū'ah Kutub Mufīdah* (no date or place), p. 178, says, 'Ṣuḥbat al-Ashrār tūrith al-ẓann bi-'l-akhyār'.

[3] The Sanūsīs also aroused the rivalry of the Sharīfs of Mecca who collaborated with the Turks against them.

[4] Cf. my *Prose and Poetry from Ḥaḍramawt* (London, 1951), pp. 40 seq.

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of his children. Some Saiyids refuse obdurately to do with the temporal rulers or, for that matter, with the British. I know of great Ḥaḍramī Saiyids, and not perhaps fanatics, in Tarīm who will never meet a non-Muslim. The market is never entered by the Ḥaddāds of al-Ḥāwī, for they count the sūqīs evil persons.[1] These partial recluses are called 'maḥjūb' or 'mastūr', but they might undertake without fear to warn those in high places—there is a small literature of naṣā'iḥ or admonitions.[2] As a model of decent modesty a Saiyid house was described to me where the woman water-carrier (mallāyah) year after year hung her water-skin at the corner of the stairs leading to the women's part of the house, without meeting the Sharīfahs—who removed it only after she had left. It is easy to understand that these ṣūfī Saiyids might have little fondness for such as the political Saiyids of 'Īnāt. The reverence for the Pious Ancestors (Salaf) is so strong that Ḥaḍramīs scarcely think of the dead as departed—indeed, the traveller entering Tarīm is immediately confronted by its cemeteries and domed tombs. The Wahhābī invasion last century rudely disturbed this reverence, destroying tombs and books, engendering an opposition expressed in a number of anti-Wahhābī polemics.[3]

All Saiyids are united on the issue of kafā'ah, eligibility in marriage. That is that they will never marry their daughters to anyone but a Saiyid or Sharīf, though their Zaidī cousins of the Yemen are much less strict.[4] It was a dubious pedigree, and the contesting of the legality of a marriage in consequence, that split the Javan Ḥaḍramīs some fifty years ago into parties, the 'Alawī and Irshādī, counter-

[1] My informant Raḥaiyam said that the Āl Ḥāmid and Āl Ḥaddād, Manṣab families, used never to enter the sūq. The Āl Bal-Faqīh used also to avoid it, but, he said, 'Rāḥ dhāka 'l-zaman bi-nāsuh wa-jā'a 'l-zaman bi-fās-uh, That time with its [noble] people has gone, and this (wretched) age with its pick has come. Cf. Muḥ. b. Hāshim, *Tārīkh*, op. cit., p. 128, for a similar case'.

[2] Cf. p. 20, n. 1, item 2.

[3] As, for example, 'Uthmān b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Aqīl, *I'ānat al-Mustarshidīn* (Batavia, 1329/1911), who describes Wahhābism as the most horrible of firaq!

[4] See Jamal J. Nasir, thesis, op. cit., p. 6, n. 1.

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Saiyids.[1] This attack on Saiyid pretensions had repercussions in Ḥaḍramawt, is re-echoed in the Egyptian modernist journal *al-Manār*, and caused riots in Java in which, strangely, Yūnus Baḥrī, war-time announcer in Berlin, became involved. Kafā'ah, eligibility, as practised in Ḥaḍramawt, is founded on pre-Islāmic concepts of nobility, and in Islām itself there is some difference as to its application. The *Sīrah*[2] quotes the Prophet, to flatter the Banū Najjār, addressing them as 'my *maternal* uncles', not 'my *paternal* uncles', which would be normal and honourable between equals.[3] The latter epithet would have implied that a Hāshimite, his grandfather, could have considered giving Muḥammad's aunt in marriage to a tribesman—which is impossible to contemplate. I have heard a Saiyid address tribal headmen in precisely the same terms, implying friendship but indirectly underlining the gulf between them. Among themselves, I am told, Saiyids reckon it a disgrace for one of their number to marry below his station, though for a man this is legally permissible in their view; and an insult they might use in a fit of temper is 'son of a ḍa'īfah', a peasant woman. I knew a case in Tarīm where the 'miskīn', mother, spoke of her daughter always as 'the sharīfah', something apart from herself. Saiyids allege that the Yāfi'ī rulers of Tarīm last century did not respect Saiyid women. A Yāfi'ī chief is said to have demanded a sharīfah in marriage, but this was so resented that the family decamped one night to settle in a village beyond his jurisdiction. As some of the Yāfi'īs had Wahhābī leanings this unwelcome proposal may have had a political colour.

[1] There is quite a literature on the controversy. Some has been examined by Ṣhrieke. The Irshādī side is well presented by Ṣalāḥ al-Bakrī, *Tārikh Ḥaḍramawt al-Ṣiyāsī*, op. cit., to which there are 'Rudūd' circulating in MS. in Ḥaḍramawt. The Irshādīs won a measure of sympathy from the Dutch, who saw in them a counterpoise to the more conservative 'Alawīs. The most prominent Irshādī was in fact not a Ḥaḍramī but a Sudanese 'ālim, Aḥmad Sūrkatī.

[2] Ed. Wüstenfeld, op. cit., p. 346. Muḥammad, speaking to 'Abbās, calls Aws and Khazraj 'my and your maternal uncles' (Guillaume, op. cit. xv, citing G. Mélamède in *Monde Oriental* (Uppsala, 1934), xxviii. 17–58).

[3] Muḥammad is, however, said to have been remotely connected with them through a female ancestor.

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Wherever they go, Saiyids seek to maintain their interpretation of kafā'ah. For example, at Pahang in Malaya Ingrams[1] says that no sharīfah in the large community of almost completely Malayanized Arabs would marry any but a Saiyid. Bā Makhramah,[2] an early 16th/10th-century legal authority of Aden, reports a case from Christian Abyssinia: a certain sharīfah's hand is sought only by one not her equal in birth, so she threatens to become a Christian if not married to him, but she has no guardian or he is out of reach. May the qāḍī lawfully marry her to this person to stop dissension (fitnah)? Bā Makhramah's answer is in the negative, dissension or no, unless she should have no guardian at all. On the other hand, al-Jarmūzī[3] a century later speaks of a Sulṭān S ḥ rt of Mombasa who married a woman of the Bā 'Alawī Ashrāf after mixing with Muslim traders and Ashrāf of Ḥaḍramawt, and left Christianity for Islām; but this is most unusual.[4]

The history of the migrations of the Ḥaḍramī Saiyids would itself fill an entire book.[5] From Tarīm they spread east and west, some to the Mahrah coast, but their westward progress has been limited, probably owing to Mashāyikh opposition, though they are established in the Upper 'Awlaqī Sulṭānate, and inhabit a special quarter of Ḥabbān.[6] In Aden they have made little headway, for, as one author[7] says,

[1] In a report to the Mukallā Secretariat about 1939 or 1940.

[2] 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar Bā Makhramah, in a manuscript volume of his *al-Fatāwī al-Kubrā* seen in Dathīnah in 1954. A photographic copy of the usual epitome to be found with the qāḍīs is now in the Library of the School.

[3] Acephalous manuscript in the Sulṭān's Library, Mukallā, probably *al-Sīrat al-Mutawakkilīyah*, p. 90, a work by al-Jarmūzī. Cf. G. Levi della Vida, *Elenco . . . Biblioteca Vaticana* (Rome, 1935), p. 104, no. 971, the description of which is very similar to the Mukallā MS.

[4] A marginal note to the Bā Riḍwān MS., op. cit., runs: 'In Qasam are Sādah of Ahl al-Dawīlah of Āl Abā 'Alawī who abandoned kafā'ah and married Mashāyikh and Qabā'il.' I met some of these Saiyids at Khōn; they wear Bedouin dress.

[5] The dispersion of the Saiyids may be studied in 'Abd al-Raḥmān's *Shams al-Ẓahīrah*, MS. cit., and in the appendixes to *Ḥāḍir al-'Ālam al-Islāmī*, op. cit. iii. 162, 164, &c.

[6] 'A Judeo-Arab Housedeed', *J.R.A.S.* (London, 1953), p. 127.

[7] Al-Ahdal, op. cit.: الغالب على اهلها قلة العلم لانهم اهل التجارة.

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'Its inhabitants have little learning generally, because they are traders.' Here, too, class distinctions tend to dissolve before wealth. There are some Ḥaḍramī Saiyids in the Yemen and the connexion with Mecca has been close and continuous.

Saiyid writers say that the great emigration to Africa took place in the 14th/8th and 15th/9th centuries, and Richard Burton[1] reports a tradition that in 1430 some forty-four Ḥaḍramī saints landed at Berberah. Saiyids entered Africa also at Mogadisho[2] and points on the Kenya coast—early Swahili poetry shows the influence of Ḥaḍramī verse-forms, and in some cases is actually composed by Ḥaḍramī Saiyids.[3] They settled in Madagascar, Zanzibar, and Komoru, where a Saiyid house once held sway.[4] With the virtual closure of Indonesia since 1941 a new stream of emigration to East Africa has commenced, and prominent Saiyids like the Manṣab of Mashhad tour such countries as Kenya, visiting Ḥaḍramīs there, collecting money for the maintenance of shrines in Arabia.[5]

The first focus of Saiyid emigration eastwards, from the Middle Ages, was India.[6] They settled in important commercial, cultural, and political centres like Bijapur and Surat, where their descendants are still said to live, Ahmedabad, Broach, Haidarabad, Gujerat, Delhi, Baroda, Calicut, Malibar, and Bengal. But the greatest emigrations of all were to Java, Sumatra, Atcheh, and Malaya—and the 'Alawī

[1] *First Footsteps in East Africa* (London, 1894), i. 54. An al-Bārr Saiyid is named as governor of Zaila' (p. 24). Āl al-Barr come from Daw'an, whence there is much emigration to Abyssinia and East Africa.

[2] Cf. I. M. Lewis, 'Sufism in Somaliland (1)', *B.S.O.A.S.* (London, 1955), xvii. iii. 598, for the Bā 'Alawī Sharīfs at Mogadisho.

[3] See Lyndon P. Harris, *The Form and Content of Traditional Swahili Literature*, Ph.D. thesis, London, 1953.

[4] *Ḥāḍir al-'Ālam al-Islāmī*, op. cit. iii. 151, and G. Ferrand, *Les Musulmanes à Madagascar et aux Îles Comores* (Paris, 1891–1902), p. 111, 'Migrations arabes'.

[5] The Aden newspaper *al-Naḥḍah*, no. clviii, p. 9, has an article on Somaliland and begging-missions to the Arabs there, and no. cxlvii, p. 2, an article on the Saiyids in Tanganyika and their works. *The Times* (4 June 1956) refers to a Ḥaḍramī Saiyid al-Shāṭirī as Arab representative on the Legislative Council.

[6] *Die Çufiten*, op. cit., and *Ḥāḍir al-'Ālam al-Islāmī*, op. cit. iii. 159–61. They are said to have gone first to India in 617/1220–1.

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Saiyids arrived some time before the Dutch. They are to be found too in Borneo, Timor, and even the far distant Philippines, where, before the Spaniards, an 'Alawī from Johore settled in Magindanao, marrying the Sultan's daughter.[1] Their descendants were still in office at the opening of this century. In every country in which they settled the Saiyids have spread Shāfi'ī orthodoxy—in Java converting Islām from a South Indian semi-pantheist mysticism to the orthodoxy of Mecca and Medinah, upholding sharī'ah and combating 'ādah law as in their native land.[2] There are tombs of Saiyid saints, an 'Aidarūs in Jakarta and a Bal-Faqīh Saiyid in Gampong Jawa. Ḥaḍramī liturgical works are used, notably the celebrated rātib al-Ḥaddād.[3] The growth of emigration at the close of the 16th/10th century was not at first approved by the ulema, but this attitude changed[4] with the anarchic conditions[5] in Ḥaḍramawt about 150 years ago. The Saiyids in Ḥaḍramawt were aware of the dangers of their dependence on Java, and a writer in the early thirties prophetically points out the effect a world war might have on their wealth there. Saiyid half-breeds, muwalladūn, multiplied greatly in Java; the Ḥaḍramīs criticize them and

[1] N. N. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Dept. of the Interior. Ethnological Survey Publications, iv. 1) (Manila, 1905), pp. 23, 36).

[2] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A. W. S. O'Sullivan (Leyden, 1905), i. 35, 154–9, 165. A short bibliography of Dutch works in which material on the Ḥaḍramī Saiyids in Indonesia may be found is contained in L. de Vries's list in W. H. Ingrams, *Report on . . . Hadramaut*, Colonial 123 (London, 1937), p. 176. D. van der Meulen's works on Ḥaḍramawt itself may also be consulted. Typical of the position held by Ḥaḍramī emigrants to the East Indies or their descendants is that of the Ḥabīb 'Umar al-Saqqāf, minister to the king of Siac, F. W. Stapel, *Corpus Diplomaticum* (*1753–99*) ('S. Gravenhage, 1956), p. 509.

[3] Of 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaddād. Snouck Hurgronje, op. cit. i. 187, refers to the Ḥikāyat Habib Hadat and (p. 181) the Kisah Abdōlah Hadat, in Atcheh.

[4] Abū Bakr . . . b. Shihāb, *Dīwān*, op. cit., p. 176, indited verses addressed to the Sharīf of Mecca complaining of the treatment of the Saiyids by the tribes in Ḥaḍramawt. Cf. B. Hashim, *Tārīkh*, op. cit., p. 101. The anonymous author dates the change of attitude from the appearance of Saiyid Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. Sumaiṭ.

[5] *Al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawīyah* (Batavia, 1347–8), II. vii. 252–75.

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their Arab fathers for omitting to maintain family registers, and succumbing to the temptations of wealth.

To present a united front against the anti-Saiyid Irshādīs the Saiyids formed a society entitled al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawīyah,[1] and other societies later sprang up in both Indonesia and Singapore. Their programmes contain provisions for the opening of schools and strengthening the ties of brotherhood, to which in Ḥaḍramawt—for these societies operated there too—they added missions to the Bedouin. Their reports claim that the Bedouin still live under tribal law called ṭāghūt and follow many grossly un-Islāmic practices—some of which, they say, it is more seemly not to mention!

I knew well a number of members of the Society of Brotherhood and Co-operation[2] to which many young men in Singapore and Tarīm belonged, and formed the impression that they genuinely wished to improve conditions in Ḥaḍramawt; but an anti-Saiyid acquaintance of mine affirmed that this society had a secret agreement, containing a proviso that the children of da'īfs, peasants, were to be instructed only up to a certain standard, with other clauses intended to perpetuate Saiyid hegemony. Such statements are constantly on the lips of anti-Saiyid Ḥaḍramīs, but I have no means of judging of their substance.[3]

The age of Java is now past and the cutting off of Javanese remittances has reduced some Saiyid families to poverty, and in 1947 I heard that the young Ḥaḍramī Muwalladūn of

[1] Its general aims and purposes are set forth in *Al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawīyah, Maqāṣid-hā wa-Āmāl-hā* (Weltevreden, n.d., *c.* 1927). Cf. *Qānūn al-Rābiṭat al-'Alawīyah al-Dākhilī* (Batavia, 1348/1929), 2nd ed., 1349 H.

[2] In Arabic, Jam'īyat al-Ukhuwwah wa-'l-Mu'āwanah. Cf. *al-Naḥḍah* (Aden, 11 Jan. 1951), II, no. lviii, p. 2. The head of the society was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Shāṭirī, whose *Dīwān* appeared in 1952—one of the leading legists amongst the younger men in Tarīm.

[3] A well-known opponent of the Saiyids, at least in his earlier days, is the playwright 'Alī Bā Kathīr, of the Bā Kathīr Mashāyikh of Saiwūn. In his first play, *Humām aw fī 'Āṣimat al-Aḥqāf*, among other accusations, he attacks them with having brought heresies and nonsense (khurāfāt) into Ḥaḍramawt. An anti-Saiyid phrase I heard in Ḥaḍramawt runs: 'Law kān laḥmī bā yakūn nafa' li'l-Sādah al-'Alawīyīn la-baraitah (syn. qaṭabtah), If my flesh were to be of any advantage to the 'Alawī Saiyids I would cut it off.'

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Java had elected to be Indonesians first and cared little for the land of their fathers.[1]

The effect of all these emigrations on the Saiyids has been to mix their blood with that of Malays, Indians, Chinese, and, within Ḥaḍramawt anyway, more rarely with Africans. It is reckoned an 'aib, or disgrace, for women to emigrate, so a Saiyid marries into the country of his adoption. I even know of one in Tarīm with freckled skin and red hair, a Nordic European type—his mother was Dutch, but he is a true Ḥaḍramī Saiyid in all but features.

The most prominent Saiyid family today is the Āl Kāf, subsisting on a capital of £25 million, invested in Singapore,[2] powerful enough before the war to mint a coinage of its own, though today the family is grown so large that the income is terribly subdivided. The outstanding member of Āl Kāf is Saiyid Sir Bū Bakr ibn Shaikh, a political genius whose majlis to this day is crowded with those come to seek his mediation or redress of injustices fancied and real. The Āl Kāf were influential in bringing the British into Ḥaḍramawt to end the perpetual insecurity, but this move was not entirely popular in religious circles. 'The Wahhābīs', they say to the Āl Kāf, 'brought you, and you brought the British!' For they regard both events as calamitous, and of course both Saiyids and Shaikhs have declined in influence since then; the ḥawṭahs have lost much of their jurisdiction and exemption from such vexations as customs duties.[3] Apart

[1] Since the Second World War the Bin Marta' family, originally of Hainin, has become powerful in Java, but before the war the Arab member on the Volksraad was a Saiyid, 'Uthmān al-Jifrī.

[2] Ingrams (manuscipt report, cf. p. 23, n. 1) puts the number of Arabs in Singapore at 500, but I imagine this must be too low. Ḥaḍramī newspapers produced there could hardly be meant to serve so small a community.

[3] My friend 'Alī b. 'Aqīl Āl Yaḥyā, in a somewhat controversial book published in Syria some years ago, puts forward the following not uninteresting view of the situation. 'The two governments of Ḥaḍramawt [i.e. Qu'aiṭī and Kathīrī], following on English interference in Ḥaḍramawt, have begun on their part to send to these headships (i.e. Shaikhs and 'Alawī Manṣabs of ḥawṭahs) governors to subjugate and rule them; it will be seen that the two governments herein have not followed a wise policy in dealing with these headships.' He accuses these governments of following a policy of spite against

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from other aspects of Westernization the increase of the power of the secular state cannot have pleased the religious. Saiyid privilege too is being attacked in various ways as not truly sanctioned by Islām. An 'Awlaqī told me that tribesmen used to fear the Saiyids who, were they to disobey them, might send the Jinn to punish them, but now they no longer fear Saiyids nor Mashāyikh, and so their power has become little. I can only touch upon contemporary controversies on matters of history between the Saiyids and their opponents, in which the Yāfi'ī Ṣalāḥ al-Bakrī[1] of Cairo, the Muftī of Johore,[2] the Saiyid historians of Tarīm and Saiwūn,[3] and the Bā Wazīr Mashāyikh of the coast have been involved. These have a strong political complexion, pro- and anti-Saiyid, but owing to their better scholarship the Saiyids have, in my opinion, had the best of it so far.

The very present peril threatening Ḥaḍramawt and its Saiyids is the tremendous migration—especially to the Ḥijāz —where Arabian Nights fortunes are made by Ḥaḍramīs. The Wādī Ḥaḍramawt is losing its male population, and unless oil be found in Mahrah country circumstances will force most of them to go elsewhere.

While conservative, the Ḥaḍramī Saiyid cannot be called fanatical, he is not unadaptable but keenly aware of the advantages of education,[4] and often a natural leader, strong

them, and of raising hatred and revolution against them which, he asserts, the colonialist policy desires. In fact, of course, the ḥawṭah presented an awkward administrative problem to the British, who have made it their policy to support the temporal rather than the spiritual rulers of the country.

[1] *Tārikh Ḥaḍramawt al-Siyāsī*, op. cit.; inaccurate in detail but nevertheless a useful source.

[2] 'Alawī b. Ṭāhir, Jany al-Shamārikh (Aden, 1369 H.), &c.

[3] 'Abdullāh b. Ḥasan Balfaqīh, various risālahs in manuscript, and *Risālatān* (Jakarta, n.d., composed in 1363 H.); *Istidrākāt wa-Taḥarriyāt 'alā Tārikh Ḥaḍramawt fī Shakhsiyāt* (Aden, 1956), against a history-book for use in schools by Sa'īd Bā Wazīr. A critical history by Saiyid Ṣāliḥ b. 'Alī al-Ḥāmidī of Saiwūn is also nearly ready for publication.

[4] For example, before the First World War the Saiyids had sent educational missions to Constantinople, and about 1939 Ingrams's report mentions that the 'Alawī Society in the Far East had sent five students to 'Iraq and fourteen to Egypt. In 1947 'Alī b. 'Aqīl headed a mission to Syria.

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in the consciousness of his birthright. Even his enemies admit his ability. Whatever changes the future may bring—and these are likely to be very considerable—I have no doubt that the Saiyids will continue an influential element in Muslim society.

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